REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-43 are now pending in this application, of which claims 1-20 stand allowed. Claims 21, 27, and 34 have been amended. Claim 43 has been added. The new amendments find full support in the original specification, claims, and drawings. No new matter has been added. In view of the above amendments and remarks that follow, reconsideration and allowance of the now pending claims 1-43 are respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejects claims 21, 27, and 32 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Razoumov et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,614,850). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Razoumov et al. teaches a method for puncturing code symbols that includes determining a number of generated code symbols S, a number of required punctures P, and a puncture distance D. To perform a symbol puncture, the symbols in a frame are counted, starting with the first symbol, and the Dth symbol is punctured. After a symbol has been punctured, the number of required punctures P is decremented.

Razoumov fails to teach or suggest, however, a puncture mask, "wherein the puncture mask is a series of bits, each bit being associated with an encoded data bit for determining whether the encoded data bit is to be transmitted," as is recited in claims 21, 27, and 34. The Examiner contends that "[e]vidently, S, P, and D would represent [a] compressed puncture mask." However, the S in Razoumov is simply an integer value indicating the total number of generated code symbols, P is an integer value indicating the number of code symbols that

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are to be punctured, and D is an integer value indicating a number of symbols between two consecutive puncture symbols. (See, Col. 7, line 55 - Col. 8, line 25). There is nothing in Razoumov that teaches or suggests, however, that either S, P, or D, either alone or in combination, constitute "a series of bits, each bit being associated with an encoded data bit for determining whether the encoded data bit is to be transmitted." (Emphasis added). Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 21, 27, and 34 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 22-26, 28-31, and 34-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Razoumov et al. in view of Li (U.S. Patent 6,385,752). Claim 33 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Razoumov et al. in view of allegedly admitted prior art. Claims 22-26, 28-31, and 33-42 are in condition for allowance because they depend on an allowable base claim, and for the additional limitations that they contain.

The Examiner also objected to allowed claims 17 and 32 due to an informality. The Examiner requested that the word "results" in both claims be changed to "result." Applicant, however, has not made the requested correction because the word "results" is more grammatically correct than "result" in the context of claims 17 and 32.

Claim 43 is new in this application. Claim 43 is also in condition for allowance because it depends on allowable claim 21, and for the additional limitation that it contains.
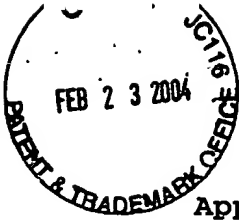
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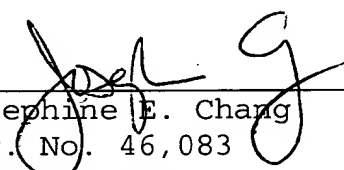**Amdt date February 18, 2004**
Reply to Office action of November 18, 2003

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the now pending claims 1-43.

Respectfully submitted,

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